STORYTELLING AT EL MUSEO: TITO PUENTE, MAMBO KING

Educator Resource Guide

Grades Pre K- 3
Dear Educator,

It’s storytelling time at El Museo!

We are excited to present Storytelling at El Museo: *Tito Puente, Mambo King* by author Monica Brown and illustrator Rafael Lopez. This is the second book featured in our Storytelling Program which highlights Latino, Latin American, and Caribbean cultures through stories.

In this story, we learn about the life, accomplishments, and music of Tito Puente. Born and raised in East Harlem, Tito Puente grew up playing stick ball and creating music with whatever he could find. At the center of the Latin jazz explosion, Tito later went on to win five Grammy awards and gain the title of “King of the Mambo.” An influential figure in the Latin music scene, Tito Puente continues to inspire people with his music.

During the program, students will explore the idea of community heroes by examining a figure with lasting influence to the neighborhood of el Barrio. In addition to the story, students will examine primary sources, experiment with music making, and create their own instrument.

We hope you will use the educational materials provided in this guide as a resource to support different areas of study in the classroom and to help prepare your students for a visit. To help you plan your lessons and units, we have included contextual information, pre and post visit lesson plans, and an appendix of resources to connect your visit to the museum to your classroom curriculum.

We look forward to having you join us for a visit to El Museo del Barrio!

The Education Department
El Museo del Barrio
Table of Contents

About Tito Puente

Preparing for your visit to El Museo del Barrio

Extending your visit to El Museo del Barrio: Classroom Activities

  • Before Your Museum Visit: Pre-Visit Guide, Music Here, There, and Everywhere!

  • After Your Museum Visit: Post-Visit Guide, Community Heroes

Appendix

Common Core State Standards for College and Career Readiness

Acknowledgments
About Tito Puente

Ernesto Anthony Puente Jr. was born at Harlem Hospital in New York City in 1923. Everyone in Spanish Harlem called him Ernestito, or Tito for short. Tito was known as an active and musical child, always banging on pots, pans, and window frames to create sounds. To feed this interest, Tito’s mother sent him to piano lessons. He later switched to percussion, which would become his focus during his musical career. He created a musical duo with his sister Anna in the 1930s and intended to become a dancer, but an injury to his ankle prevented him from pursuing this.

Tito served in the Navy for three years during World War II after being drafted in 1942. The GI Bill allowed him to study music at the Juilliard School of Music where he completed a formal education in conducting, orchestration, and music theory.

During the 1950s, Tito Puente was at the height of his popularity and helped to bring sounds like the mambo and cha-cha to mainstream audiences. During his lifetime, he recorded 118 albums and won five Grammies, including the Grammy Lifetime Achievement Award. In addition to his solo work, he collaborated with some of the most famous Latin musicians of the twentieth century, including Machito, Santana, Willie Bobo, Gloria Estefan, La Lupe, and Celia Cruz. In addition to his musical work, Tito Puente founded the Tito Puente Educational Foundation, which offers scholarships to students to study music at the Juilliard School of Music. Some of his most famous albums include, *Dance Mania*, *A Tribute to Benny Moré*, *On Broadway*, *Mambo Diablo*, and *Goza Mi Timbal*. He died in New York City on May 31st, 2000 at the age of 77.
Preparing for Your Visit to El Museo del Barrio

The following preparation is intended to support teachers in integrating the program and story Tito Puente, Mambo King into their curriculum. Use the discussion questions and activities outlined in the guide before and after your visit to continue the conversation with your students.

Feel free to come to the museum with the material you create at school or send us pictures to educationprograms@elmuseo.org. We will try to include your work in your visit.
Activities for Grades PreK-3: Tito Puente, Mambo King

Before Your Museum Visit

Music Here, There and Everywhere!

Objective: Students will be able to examine the role and effect of music in their lives. Students will think about their everyday interactions with music based on the spaces they encounter.

Procedure:

- Students will begin by thinking about a question: What is music?
- The educator will chart student responses as they have a discussion.
- Students may bring up different kinds of music, how it makes them feel, or where they interact with music. If students get stuck, bring up some of these elements to contribute to their idea of music.
- Collect all the ideas together and sum up the conversation: Our class thinks music is....
- Transition into the next activity:
  - Music is everywhere we go and can reflect how we feel or where we are. We are going to create music maps of what our spaces are like in our classroom, school, school neighborhood, and home. Let’s start by thinking about this moment in our day right now. Close your eyes. What do you hear? Where are those sounds coming from? How does it make you feel?
  - Together, how could we illustrate these sounds? Maybe we want to use lines and shapes? Maybe we want to draw what is creating that sound? Let’s draw together. Draw their suggestions on chart paper.
  - Everyone will be creating their own music maps just like this. We are going to start by thinking about the music and sounds that we hear in our own classroom. Use the template in Appendix, Figure 1.
- Give students crayons, colored pencils, or markers to complete this activity.
  - There is a section on each worksheet for students to illustrate the music and sounds in their homes. This could be done from memory with older students or could be used as a take home activity for younger students.
  - If your school allows, take a walk around the block surrounding your school. Have students take a sound walk, listening to what they hear and illustrating it on their map for the school neighborhood section.

Materials
- Chart paper
- Markers
- Music Map Worksheet (See Appendix, Figure 1)
- Colored Pencils
- Crayons
- Pencils
- Music Making Words (See Appendix, Figure 2)
- Walk around your school during classroom transitions and observe the sounds present in the building.

- **Now that you have thought a lot about the sounds and music that we hear every day, let’s create a concert using some of those sounds!**
- Utilize the Music Making Words worksheet for younger students who might have trouble coming up with words for sounds (See Appendix, Figure 2)
  - Split students into four groups: Home, School Neighborhood, School, and Classroom.
  - Using their sound maps, have students identify one sound word for a sound they experienced in one of these spaces.
  - Taking turns in each group, have all students repeat their sound word to a beat or rhythm. Model a beat they can use before you begin. For older students, more complicated beats and rounds can be used.
  - After each group has performed their concert discuss: *What did you notice about the sounds from each location? Did it sound like music to you? Were there similar sounds for each location? What was different about them? How did each concert make you feel?*

- **Now that we have explored sounds in our own communities and explored what music is, we are going to learn about a very important musician who became known as a hero in his community.**

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**Rhythm**

A strong, regular, repeated pattern of sound.
Activities for Grades Pre K-3: Tito Puente, Mambo King

After Your Museum Visit

Community Heroes

Objective: Students will explore the idea of community heroes. Students will think about the characteristics of a hero related to their experience learning about Tito Puente. Students will create their own “Hero Hallway of Fame” to honor their own personal and community heroes.

Procedure:

- Reflect on student experiences at the museum: What were you surprised by? What did you want to learn more about?
- Students can discuss in pairs, reflect individually, or can discuss as a whole group during this opening exercise.
- Come back together as a group to chart their responses. Depending on their responses, these could be used to extend into a research project.
- Transition into the next activity:
  - Today we are going to think about our own community heroes. Tito Puente is considered a community hero in the neighborhood of East Harlem or el Barrio. Why do people think of Tito Puente as a community hero? What do you remember from the story? Let’s think about who your heroes might be.
  - Once you have decided on your hero we are going to unpack what makes them a hero! Everyone will have the opportunity to think about the traits of their community hero by either writing or drawing (See Appendix, Figure 3).
- Once students have completed the Community Hero Traits worksheet, discuss what some of their traits were for their community heroes. Were there any similarities between the traits of our community heroes?
- Let’s celebrate our community heroes by creating a Hero Hallway of Fame! Each student will create their own portrait of their community hero. Using colored pencils, markers, paint, yarn, fabric, or any other art materials available create a portrait of your hero. Encourage students to think about including something in their portrait that might let us know something about them. For example, pictures of Tito Puente often include him with his drum sticks for when he played the timbales.
• Display student portraits under a banner, “Hero Hallway of Fame.”
  o An extension of this project could include a written label describing why this person is a community hero, which could then be displayed next to their portrait.
• To create a more interactive element to the hallway of fame, include a blank piece of chart paper, or any large paper, that asks others, “What makes someone a community hero?” Students, teachers, and the school community can add traits that make someone a community hero. The students can get the message board started by adding some of their own traits from the Community Heroes Traits Worksheet.
Appendix, Figure 1
Sound Map
## Music Making Words

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WHAT TRAITS MAKE UP A COMMUNITY HERO?

HERO:
Common Core State Standards for College and Career Readiness

Standards addressed throughout guided visits and pre and post lessons:

CCSS.ELA-Literacy.R1

Read closely to determine what the text says explicitly and to make logical inferences from it; cite specific textual evidence when writing or speaking to support conclusions drawn from the text.

CCSS.ELA-Literacy.R2

Determine central ideas or themes of a text and analyze their development; summarize the key supporting details and ideas.

CCSS.ELA-Literacy.R7

Integrate and evaluate content presented in diverse media and formats, including visually and quantitatively, as well as in words.

CCSS.ELA-Literacy.SL1

Prepare for and participate effectively in a range of conversations and collaborations with diverse partners, building on others’ ideas and expressing their own clearly and persuasively.

CCSS.ELA-Literacy.W1

Write informative/explanatory texts to examine and convey complex ideas and information clearly and accurately through the effective selection, organization, and analysis of content.

During the guided visit, these standards are adapted to each grade according to the Common Core State Standards for College and Career Readiness.
Acknowledgements

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